

776 Many of the daily occurrences can be traced to their activity. They are sometimes friendly, but it actually happens that they are more often unfriendly and do their best to injure and annoy human beings. The Kols have mentioned certain kinds of spirits with which they are familiar. A few Kols have claimed actual encounters with them, and yet others were not quite so certain of their existence.

775 The *Bhut* is commonly mentioned by the Kol, but the use of the term is frequently in a general sense. Ordinarily this is the spirit of one who has died a sudden or a tragic death. A *bhut* is always of the male gender. The spirit of a man killed by a train is sure to become a wandering *bhut*. So is the spirit of a murdered man, as well as one dying of a dread disease. The general belief is that it will remain in this form for twelve years until released. In a general sense, any man not taken up by Bhagawan after death becomes a wandering *bhut*.

[165] Another curious explanation was given. It was claimed that the expectation of life for a Kol is about thirty years, and for this period one must dwell on earth, whether in the body or in the spirit. If a person twenty years of age should die for any reason, his spirit will still have to stay upon the earth for another ten years, and will wander in the form of a *bhut*. A man living past thirty years of age will not become a *bhut* unless he meets a tragic end. The same group also related that during this unexpired period in which the spirit must wander upon the earth, the spirit of a very good man becomes a very evil *bhut*, while the spirit of a very bad man was a friendly and harmless *bhut*!

775 The *bhut* of a murdered man is certain to haunt the murderer's family and in the course of time is sure to destroy it. Murder thus means only more trouble and Kols should never resort to it. It is a fact that murders among Kols are very unusual. *Bhuts* as a rule never injure members of their own families and will even help them. Therefore the Kol holds that one should never fear the spirit of a loved one.

775 *Bhuts* and other spirits may enter a room as does the air which comes in everywhere; though the average Kol usually considers that they enter through some larger opening in the house, such as a door or a window. The lack of windows in Kol houses is partly due to this point of view.

[342] The *Churel* is the spirit of a female who has died in distressing circumstances, especially if the death was caused by child bearing. The *churel* is of dreadful appearance, and her feet, if one would look at them, are turned backwards. She often attempts to seduce men and ruin them. As a rule her front is attractive but she is black and